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Study finds student mobility and behavior management barriers to Memphis City Schools' success

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Memphis City school system has launched many district-wide reform efforts to monitor school performance and establish accountability, according to a new report from the Comptroller's Office of Education Accountability. However, the district struggles with student mobility and student behavior.

The report, titled "District Approaches to Improving High Priority Schools – Memphis City Schools," looks at the district's response to six schools that failed to make adequate yearly progress on state assessments for three years in a row.

Student Mobility – The student mobility rate in Memphis City Schools (MCS) has slowly increased from 25 percent in 2001-02 to 30 percent in 2005-06. Thirty-percent of MCS students move from one school to another for reasons other than promotion to the next school level.

Budget – Facing budget shortfalls, MCS focuses on efficiency and seeking financial resources outside of traditional school funding sources.

Highly Qualified Teachers – MCS partners with various agencies to prepare middle school mathematics and science teachers and to help middle school teachers achieve Highly Qualified status.

Student Behavior – MCS now uses the system-wide Blue Ribbon Behavior Plan for student behavior management. However, a comparison of behavior data from 2004-05, the year prior to Blue Ribbon, and 2005-06, the first year of Blue Ribbon implementation, reveals growing numbers of violence-related incidents.

The report recommends that Memphis City Schools:

- Maintain a steady focus on school-level capacity for and implementation of district-wide reform efforts.
- Study the issue of student mobility in Memphis in an attempt to coordinate interventions with city services.
- Continue the established momentum focused on recruitment, retention, and leadership opportunities for high quality teachers.
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The report is available on the Comptroller's Web site at www.comptroller.state.tn.us.

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